Promote Health Through Restriction of Extreme Drink Specials

Health and well-being are important aspects of our quality of life in Grand Forks. High-risk alcohol use has undesirable consequences for us as individuals and for the community at large. Community impacts include driving under the influence, other alcohol-related crimes, injuries, motor vehicle crashes (including fatal ones), and assault. One way Grand Forks can reach our full potential as a leader in health and wellness is through restricting extreme drink specials that encourage high-risk alcohol use. The restrictions would not be aimed at eliminating moderate drink specials. Restricting extreme drink specials would reduce high-risk alcohol use and enhance the health and vibrancy of our community.

How Can the Restriction of Extreme Drink Specials Help?

One of the strongest predictors of overconsumption of alcohol is lower prices. A 2009 study indicated that price was the best predictor of the number of alcoholic beverages consumed in one sitting. Researchers also found moderate use was more common in communities with restrictions on extreme drink specials.

Discontinuing all-you-can-drink specials may have the greatest impact on reducing overconsumption of alcoholic beverages, which results in better health of the community.

As price increases, negative impacts of binge drinking decrease. Reduced high-risk drinking makes communities safer due to fewer motor vehicle crashes and traffic offenses.

What Are Other Places Doing?

The majority of states (27) have happy hour laws. 23 states prohibit unlimited alcoholic beverages. 18 states prohibit lowering drink prices during a specified day/time. 16 states prohibit additional servings for a set price (3 for 1, 2 for 1).

Grand Forks could be at the forefront in our region and be recognized as a leader in health promotion. Fargo, ND and St. Cloud, MN are considering similar options.
What Do We Propose?

An ordinance prohibiting the following:

- Unlimited alcoholic beverages for a fixed price or no cost (e.g., all you can drink specials, including those targeted to specific groups – men’s nights, ladies’ nights)
- 3 or more for the price of one specials
- Sponsorship of drinking games and contests (where the focus of the game or contest is drinking)

What is Grand Forks Currently Doing?

In Grand Forks there are no current ordinances regulating extreme drink specials. Members of the hospitality industry have suggested that the competitive market creates pressure to offer low-price drinks, which impacts their bottom line. Most businesses in the Grand Forks area offer moderate drink special promotions. However, there are a small number of establishments that offer more extreme drink specials. Extreme drink special restrictions will help level the playing field among businesses, and lead to better health and a better community.

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References:

2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2011). Results from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of national findings.